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ABSTRACT

A history of the status of women in Hawaii, particularly, and the United States, in general, is documented in this publication. Two case studies of women encountering employment discrimination in Hawaii because of their sex and their actions to obtain equal employment conditions are summarized. Present employment conditions in Hawaii are followed by a section on women of old Hawaii. The history of the women's movement in the United States is discussed in terms of individual rights, religion, education, and employment. The final sections discuss combating sex discrimination by the political activities of voting, party participation, holding office, and uniting diverse groups in supporting the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. (MLF)

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out of the cage
women emerging

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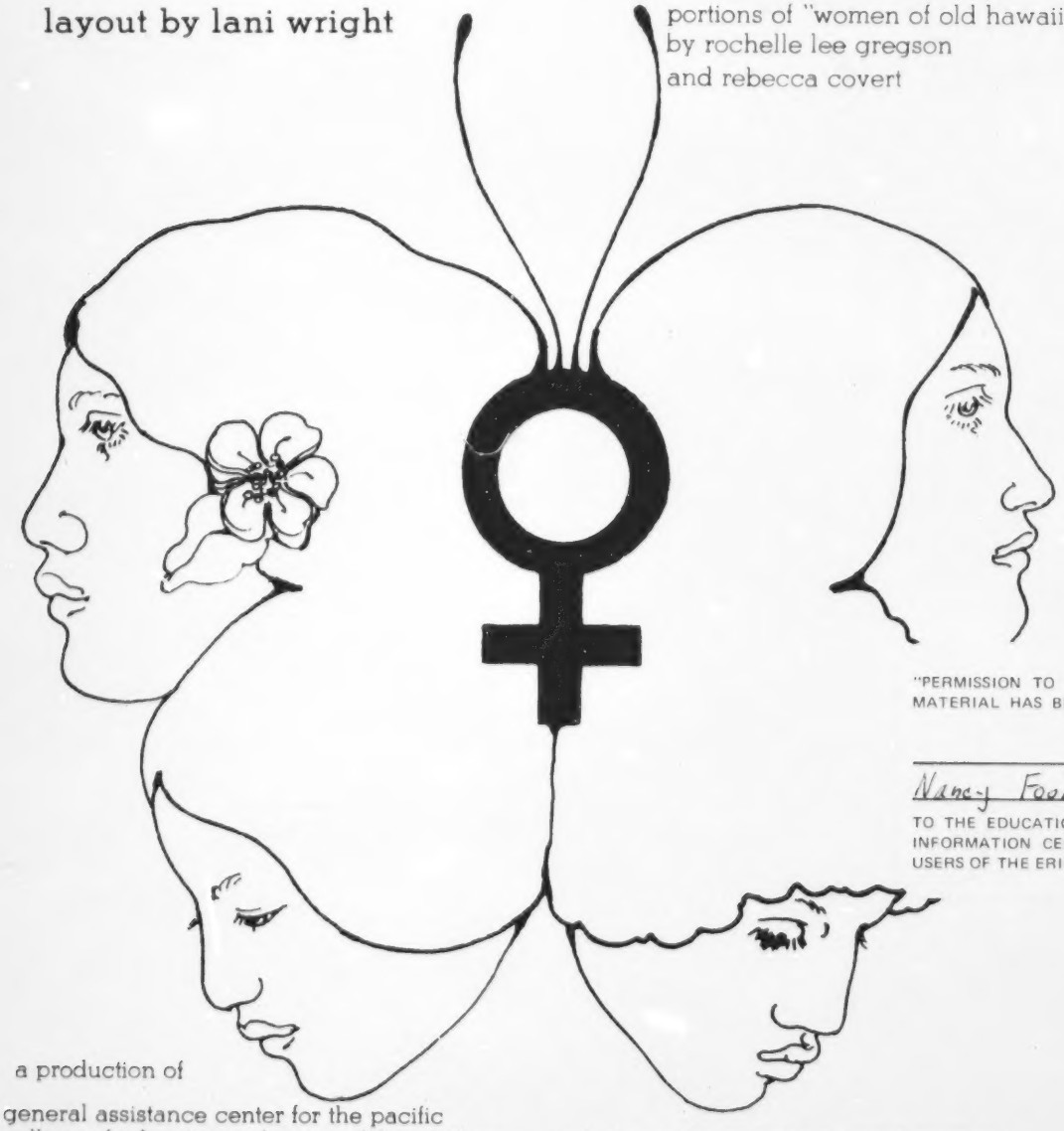

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a dedication.

Lena K. Reverio

june 7, 1932—october 3, 1975

This book is dedicated to Lena K. Reverio, whose qualities of compassion and diligence, committing her life in the service of those less fortunate than herself, are neither male nor female characteristics - but are essential to build the kind of world we are striving for. Had Lena pursued the femininity model she would not have accomplished all that she did - nor was Lena the other extreme that females are thrown into, the tomboy.

Lena was active in a variety of organizations - State and local Parent-Teachers' Associations, Hawaii Housing Authority Eviction Board, Human Services Center Advisory Board, Honolulu Model Cities Program, Progressive Neighborhood Task Force, and the Welfare Recipient Advisory Council, to name but a few.

Throughout her efforts she empowered great numbers of people and showed that strength is in numbers. She was not so much the lone fighter as she was the popular and effective advocate of the poor and the powerless. She helped the poor to understand and use their political power and was a major figure in the development of the lower-incomed as a visible, dignified, and sophisticated pressure group that could not be ignored.

Lena K. Reverio was indeed the model of a loving, giving human being.

s.a.a.

The crime prevention unit of the Honolulu Police Department was called the "cage" by the policewomen who worked there. It was the only division open to women in 1953 and for many years to follow. Once in the "cage", a woman could not transfer out to other areas of police work.

Lucile Abreu was one of four women in the crime prevention unit. She went on to become valedictorian of her 1953 class of police officers.

After working in crime prevention for three years, she wanted to move on to other areas of police work. For the next 19 years, Abreu took every available test that was required for different police assignments. She passed eight exams, was by-passed for promotions at least twice, and faced admission standards much higher than those set for men. She couldn't get out of the "cage" - simply because she was a female.

Finally in early 1972, after having tried every other avenue, Abreu filed a federal complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in San Francisco and Washington D.C., as there was no commission in Honolulu. Various federal laws had made certain kinds of discrimination against women illegal since the early

Equal Chance for Promotion

Police Revise Policy on Hiring of Women

By Mary Adamski
Star-Bulletin Writer

Women will have an equal chance to become police officers in an agreement signed last week by the Honolulu Police Department.

The agreement with the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission came after two weeks of "conciliation" meetings between police officials and a federal team from Washington, D.C.

The points of the agreement include the following.

Women will be hired on a "one for one" basis with men, dependent on the availability of qualified women applicants.

THE HEIGHT requirement for all applicants will continue to be five feet seven inches.

Mrs. Lucille Abreu will be promoted to sergeant status. The promotion, with pay and benefits, will be retroactive to March 1972, and there will be no probation period for her.

The other six policewomen now assigned to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Division will have the choice of taking assignment elsewhere in the police department.

The women were hired under the previous policy in which the policewoman position was a separate civil service category from policemen.

It was a complaint to the EEOC by Mrs. Abreu which set off the federal investigation which led to last week's agreement. The agreement must be approved by federal officials in Washington before it takes effect.

MRS. ABREU complained that she was discriminated against and passed over for promotion because she is a woman.

The promotion she has been given through the federal agreement is retroactive to the date when she filed the complaint.

"I'm happy about the decision but it is a rather bittersweet victory," Mrs. Abreu said today. "I would have been happier if I had had the opportunity to be promoted in 1967, the first time I took the sergeant's test.

"This has been a clean fight and it will show people that the police have to abide by the federal law," she said.

The original investigating team from EEOC recommended last January that the department be required to have women to make up 30 per cent of the police force.

Police Chief Francis Keala was out in his office today and could not be reached for comment. Deputy Chief Eugene Fletcher and other top ranking police officials were in a staff meeting all morning and couldn't be reached for comment.

Lucille Abreu

1960's. Her legal complaint charged the Chief of Police, the Mayor of Honolulu, and the City and County Civil Service System with discriminating against her on the basis of her sex.

"They didn't think I'd do it," Abreu said years later about her formal complaint. "They felt that they were not discriminatory to women, but I strongly believed that there wasn't equal treatment for women and that I'd had enough of the runaround and I had every right to a job I was qualified for. But they obviously weren't going to give it to me. I was determined to fight for it."

As a result of the federal complaint, several discriminatory standards were changed. The height restriction of 5'9" was changed to 5'7" and was eventually eliminated, educational standards for women were lowered to those for men, and women were no longer automatically assigned to crime prevention.

As Abreu relates, "My case couldn't have gone as far as it did without the early help of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers. At the time it was the only union in the whole nation that backed a police woman in the fight against sex discrimination." [1]

While Lucile Abreu was battling discrimination in police work, Joan Abramson was running up against similar obstacles in the teaching profession. A former newspaper reporter, editor, and author, Abramson had been an English instructor at the University of Hawaii since she began teaching there in 1967. The high esteem in which she was held by her fellow faculty members and students earned her the Chairmanship of the Faculty Senate and a nomination for an Excellence-in-Teaching Award.

But it could not free her from a "cage" every bit as binding as the one that had imprisoned Abreu. Women teachers at the university, including Abramson, were typically trapped in low-paying temporary positions with the most demanding teaching loads, while men hired at the same time were given higher positions or whizzed past the women in promotions even when they were not as well qualified.

In 1971, while still in a temporary status, despite having

been unanimously recommended for a permanent position three times by official faculty committees, Abramson was named Assistant Director of "New College", a major innovative program. A substantial pay raise was in order; important new responsibilities went with the job along with two months additional work each year. Instead, her salary was cut - to less than half of what the man she replaced had been making!

She filed charges of sex discrimination with the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), and a state court.

Her action got results. Federal officials ordered a 53 percent jump in her pay - the first equal-pay-for-equal-work award for a university woman in the United States. The Department of HEW in Washington, D.C. withheld $2.4 million in federal grant money from the University of Hawaii until the university promised to end its discriminatory procedures.

Three years after she filed her charges several issues remained unresolved before the court. Abramson maintained the University had broken its promise to end discrimination, and she still had not been given a permanent faculty position. [2]

But her efforts had shown that sex discrimination was a reality at the University of Hawaii. Government agencies responsible for enforcing the law had to officially recognize the University's violations. The effort to correct the situation had begun.

It is important to recognize what women mean by equal rights in employment. Their point is not that all or even most women should be police officers, heads of university departments, or construction workers and military commanders. Rather their belief is that women who are interested and qualified should not be held back by restrictions based on sex role stereotypes.

Sex discrimination still affects everyone today. Today's high school graduates will face both traditional and changing attitudes on the roles of women and men in society. These attitudes will affect the student's rate of pay, the kinds of jobs

open to them, opportunities for advancement, educational opportunities, financial matters in marriage and in divorce situations.

problems in hawaii

> Section 1. *Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.*
>
> Section 2. *The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.*
>
> Section 3. *This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.*

In 1972, Hawaii's Legislature was the first in the country to approve the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). By 1974 almost two dozen legislative bills had been successfully lobbied into law by the united effort of women's groups throughout the State. The new protections included providing temporary disability benefits to pregnant working women, equalizing the division of property rights between spouses after a divorce, and providing police protection for a prevalent problem of women - physical assault and abuse by their spouses. [3]

That same year the State Commission on the Status of Women retained the services of a private attorney to review all existing Hawaii Statutes to identify discriminatory statutory provisions and draft modifications to be presented to the State legislature.

Hawaii leads the nation with one of the highest percentages of women who work: 49% for all of Hawaii's women in 1970 compared with 43% for the nation's women. [4] Among the problems common to most working women are the following:

1. Women tend to be employed in lower-skilled jobs offering fewer opportunities for advancement.

2. Increased percentages of women are working now - many as family heads providing the only income for a family - earning considerably less than men. Females head about ten percent of all families on Oahu. [5]

In 1970 the average earnings of women who worked year-round was 64% of men's earnings. [6] And according to the Profile of Oahu women,

> ...the largest percentage of female family heads appears in the pay range of $5,000 to $9,999 while the largest percentage for males occurs in the $15,000 to $24,999 range. [7]

6

Stated in another way, in 1970 "the median income of female college graduates was less than that of male high school dropouts." [8]

3. Working mothers are seriously hampered by the lack of adequate child care facilities.

Almost 40 percent of all mothers 16 years or older with children under six are working or seeking employment, yet there is no system of child care centers on a mass scale. Women with already lower rates of pay than men must deduct the added cost of child care services or work at part-time jobs to fit around their school-age children.

Recalling the resistance that Lucille Abreu and Joan Abramson encountered, one might be tempted to think that relatively little is being done to open more doors to women, and that change is almost impossible to achieve. But as we have noted, women in Hawaii have been working together for fair treatment under the law. While enforcement of their legislative gains still lies ahead, these victories look more impressive when one recognizes how far women have come over the last two centuries in Hawaii.

The first blow of equal rights for women in Hawaii was struck by Queen Kaahumanu in the early 1800's, with the breaking of the eating kapu. Kapus, or religious laws, placed restrictions on women, for Hawaiian women were considered inferior to men. So according to the eating kapu, women and men ate separately, and certain foods such as bananas, coconuts, pork, and the luau delicacy, baked dog, were for men only. [9]

Kaahumanu was the favorite wife of King Kamehameha I, and was well known for her intelligence, fearlessness, beauty and strength. After the King's death, Kaahumanu became the first official woman lawmaker in Hawaii, assuming the position of Kuhina-Nui or Vice King. This political position was occupied solely by women until it was abolished in 1866. [10] As joint ruler of the land with the heir to the throne, young Liholiho, Kaahumanu held the only position which allowed a veto over the King. As a high chiefess, Kaahumanu was one of the few who could do something about the subjugation of women by numerous kapus.

The eating kapu was broken by Kaahumanu and Liholiho's mother, Queen Keopuolani, who openly ate in front of the King repeatedly. Finally, Liholiho himself broke with tradition, and at a public banquet "went to the women's table and began piling pieces of food into his mouth." [11] Both shock and celebration followed the historic episode, for many had long awaited the destruction of the kapu system, while others were outraged.

At the end of 1819, six months after Kamehameha I died, the kapu system was abolished by law. But laws that allow new ways of doing things and that overturn basic attitudes long held in society do not bring about changes automatically, or without some struggle among the people. A bloody battle followed, as people fought against or for the changes.

History was made by many courageous and far-sighted women as political leaders, educators, religious leaders, perpetuators of the Hawaiian culture and inspiring contributors to it. Women such as Chiefess Kapiolani, Queen Emma, Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, and Queen Liliuokalani will long be remembered for their leadership.

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field workers, sugar industry

By the turn of the century there were three general groups of women in Hawaii: those of the native population, missionary and other women from the American mainland, and laborers imported from countries such as Portugal and Japan to work on the agricultural plantations.

The missionary women did the voluntary, social service work that hundreds of women in and out of the church were doing across the United States: efforts in education, setting up hospitals, child care and the arts. The Stranger's Friend Society, the

oldest women's club in Hawaii, was started around 1850. Other clubs quickly followed, including the Catholic Women's Guild, the Iolani Guild and Auxiliary of St. Andrew's Cathedral.

In the early days of the plantation immigrants in the late 1880's, the ratio of the sexes was quite unbalanced: four or five males to one female. Some Portuguese women had come with their husbands and many Japanese women came as newlyweds in marriages arranged by families from the old country, known only to their prospective husbands by pictures exchanged through correspondence. Between 1911 and 1919, over 9,800 Japanese picture brides arrived.

These and other women, such as the Chinese, Puerto Rican, Korean and Filipino women, arrived finding much work to keep them busy. Many joined their husbands to work in the cane fields, and many would carry their youngest child strapped to their back as they entered the fields for the daily labor. There were long hours of hard work in the fields, low wages, unsanitary living conditions, a lack of medical attention, and harsh supervision. Often wives found themselves taking on extra work to supplement the family income. Besides field work, plantation wives washed laundry for bachelors and baked meals, often three times a day. As the men entered new labor fields, their wives were usually

field worker in hawaii
archives of hawaii photo

right next to them helping their husbands in barber shops and general stores.

In 1903 Hawaiian Pineapple Company ran off its first production line at Wahiawa cannery, producing 1,893 cases of pine. Women who previously were working in the fields, in addition to the younger women available to enter the labor force, found work at the growing cannery. On the island of Hawaii, many women were finding work in the coffee bean fields and sorting beans for marketing.

Because of the hardships of plantation life, workers began to organize into labor unions. Strikes started within the first decade of 1900. The 1920 strike was significant for uniting two races, Japanese and Filipino, in a common struggle against their

coffee pickers archives of hawaii photo

plantation bosses. While history does not take note of women's direct input into these early struggles, their presence and stamina must be accounted for. It was the wives and families who stood behind the male workers in their vocal battlefields. In 1902, 16,768 women and children worked plantations. This figure rose to 24,093 within eight years, compared with a total plantation work force of 43,917. This means that in 1910 half of the plantation labor force was composed of women and children. They had as much to lose or gain in union battles as their male counterparts.

Eventually women joined together with men in Hawaii to demand better working and living conditions, higher pay, union recognition, and other rights, but there was never any mass mobilization of women as was occurring in the mainland United States.

women's movement in the united states

There have been two major periods of the women's movement in the United States: the first peaked in 1920 and the second began in the mid-1960's.

The early activity included issues of individual rights, intolerable working conditions, education, and the push for the vote. Much of the effort ended shortly after suffrage was won in 1920, though working women continued to organize for better work benefits after that.

During the first women's movement that began over 150 years ago:

1. Women were used as cheap labor by the millions, working for penny wages, 12-16 hours a day in deafening and suffocating factory surroundings.

2. Married women had no property rights, including the right to keep their earnings from outside the home.

3. The struggle to abolish slavery involved women as leaders and supporters - women and men who later spoke out against the "slavery" of women and pushed for women's rights. [12]

The second women's movement in America began in the mid-1960's.

Betty Friedan's book The Feminine Mystique had sparked widespread discussion of the oppression of women as a class. The formation of informal women's discussion groups led to increased recognition by women that problems they had thought of as individual inadequacies were in fact mutually shared by women, and had to be worked on together.

In 1966 Friedan and 27 other women formed the National Organization for Women (NOW), aimed at removing barriers to equal participation of women in employment, education, religion, law and politics, as well as tackling problems of women in poverty, and women's image in the media. [13]

There were three major events that led to the burst of women's activity in the mid-1960's.

First, social movements of the sixties helped to develop the troops for the women's movement: the civil rights movement headed by Rev. Martin Luther King, and the peace or anti-war movement. In both efforts women helped others out of their oppression. For the civil rights movement it meant voter registration drives, lunch-counter sit-ins, or massive political demonstrations for equal rights for Blacks whose status as "worse than second-class citizens" rivaled that of women. For the peace effort, it meant helping in demonstrations, marches, campus debates, or lobbying for abolition of the nation's military mandatory draft system. In time, women realized it was time they helped themselves.

Second, for many women the economic and social conditions had raised expectations that were not being met. Births declined with widespread use of the pill. Women, particularly middle-incomed, had more: convenience appliances for the home, leisure time, education, money, cars, mobility, and divorces, but fewer job opportunities. And the influence of the church declined as an institution that had traditionally held families together.

Third, women had certain laws like the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin - and sex. The sex provision was treated as a joke at the time and had been introduced by a southern Congressman who wanted to kill passage of the proposed legislation. He argued about the problems of sexually integrated restrooms and military battlefields.

But the joke was over. The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC), the federal agency enforcing the Civil Rights Act found:

1. That 40% or more of the complaints filed in its first year charged discrimination on the basis of sex.

2. According to an EEOC report, nearly 6,000 charges of sex discrimination were filed in 1971, a 62% increase over 1970.[14]

3. The flood of complaints and the Commission's slowness in handling them resulted in an EEOC backlog of more than 50,000 cases during 1972. [15]

individual rights

Under early law in most states, a husband and a wife were only one person - the husband. Without legal recognition, a wife could not own property, was not legally responsible for the care of her children, could not manage earnings she brought into the family, and gave up the right of ownership of any property she brought to her marriage.

archives of hawaii photo

In a speech before the New York Assembly in 1854, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, an outspoken fighter for women's rights compared the status of women to that of "the slave on the southern plantation..." [16]

As Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone and others broke with tradition and addressed male lawmakers in various states, they cited case after case of cruelty and injustice suffered by women:

> ...a widow thrust out of her home hours after her husband's death, a mother unable to save her son from being apprenticed to a gambler, another mother legally unable to protect her daughter from being forced into a brothel, women forcibly separated from their children for no reason save a husband's anger. [17]

Slowly, laws affecting women's personal lives were changed. In 1830, states began passing a series of new laws called the Married Women's Property Acts, giving wives the right to contract, sue, and be sued on their own. Wives could manage and control property they acquired prior to marriage. They could keep money they earned outside the family. [18]

There is presently federal legislation covering equal pay for equal work, minimum wage, equal employment opportunities, granting of financial credit, access to facilities serving the public, and equal educational opportunities in public institutions. Though there are various conditions and restrictions in the application of these laws, they still set national standards of nondiscrimination that must be followed. [19]

Problem areas not covered by federal law are left to the discretion of the individual states. This is where one finds the most variation in provision of equal rights for women.

Areas in which there are major legal biases against women include:

1. Criminal Law: The socio-sexual double standard in criminal law discriminates heavily against women. Prostitution is a criminal act for women but not for men. Women found guilty of the

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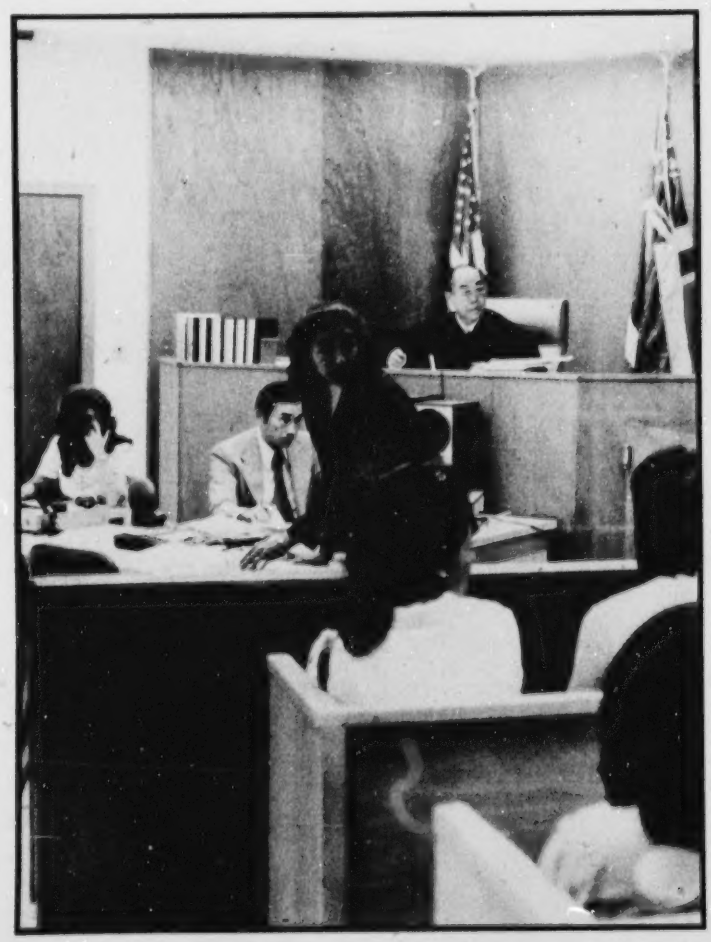
same offenses as men may receive longer sentences.

> In some states women receive longer sentences for drunkenness, robbery, and other offenses than do men. New York has a law for youthful offenders...which provides for the incarceration of women declared incorrigible until they are twenty...while young incorrigible men cannot be held past the age of eighteen. [20]

Rape laws are under increasing attack as reflecting a sexual double standard that implies consent by the female victim. Women's groups everywhere are working for legal reforms and are establishing rape crisis centers to counsel rape victims.

2. Family Law: Laws relating to how property is divided in a divorce situation, the right of a married woman to keep her surname, custody of children, parental rights to the earnings of their children, the adoption of children, and property rights and support allowance of a widow, often treat women different than men.



3. Credit: The federal Equal Credit Opportunity Act took effect late in 1975. It outlawed many of

the old techniques that had been used to deny financial credit on the basis of sex and marital status to working women.

4. Abortion: The controversial question in the debate of a woman's right to have an abortion is "when does human life begin and when should it be entitled to legal protection?" Opponents of abortion defend the unborn child's right to life. Proponents of abortion believe the choice of whether or not a pregnancy is to be continued should be left up to the woman concerned. Since the opinions are so divided on the question of when new life becomes a human being, proponents believe it is a religious question on which the law should take no position.

However, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that state laws restricting abortion in the early stages of pregnancy violate a woman's right to privacy.

Still, the controversy continues.

religion

"If I had one dream, it would be to become a bishop."

So said a Roman Catholic mother of four from Illinois at the first worldwide meeting on the ordination of women as Roman Catholic priests, held in the United States at the end of 1975.

During the gathering, more than 250 other women declared their hopes to someday be ordained as priests. The Roman Catholic mother and 1,200 others, mostly nuns, from 44 states and six foreign countries formed a national group at the end of the three-day conference to do away with the second class status of women in the church. The group will be pressing for women to be allowed into the priesthood.

Sister Elizabeth Carroll of Washington told the conference:

> The proper place for women in the church is not participation 'in' but questioning 'of' that system of priestly relations which leave many young ordained (priests) feeling

> as oppressed as women do. Administrative structures of secrecy, vindictiveness, reliance on fear are totalitarianism, not Christian ways of proceeding. [21]

The Roman Catholic church is not the only religious institution in which women are asking to be fully participating members of the church.

As reform-minded clergy of other faiths participate in ceremonies expanding the role of women, they are sometimes being censored by religious authorities.

In other instances they are part of the change that led the spiritual head of the Church of England to predict that women will soon be ordained into the priesthood. This prediction was made at the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1975. [22]

education

> Years ago, the girls in my high school graduation class who did not yet have engagement rings were teased that they were going to college to obtain their "Mrs." degree.
> Later, women who were married and working while their husbands went to school were told they should be very proud to be getting their "PhT" degree - putting husband through!
> Whether a woman is actively going to school or actively working to support a husband who is going to school the reason attributed to the activity is the same: advancing oneself and thereby identifying oneself through a man.
>
> Joan Abramson, from
> THE INVISIBLE WOMAN, pp. 73-4

The myth that only men are serious breadwinners and workers has generated a host of weathered myths about women and education.

Myth: A female student is not serious about her education, and will probably drop out from school to get married and have children.

Fact: In 1973 working women in the United States had an average of 12.5 years of education. That was higher than the figure for all men in the labor force, which averaged 12.4 years. The American Council on Education reported on higher high school grades of women in its report of freshmen entering 4-year colleges in 1968: "more than 40% of the girls had averages of B+ or better but only 18% of the boys could boast of the same." [23]

Myth: If the female student does graduate, she may never use her training in a job, and even if she does work, it will be on a part-time basis, and not career-oriented.

Fact: A 1972 study by the American Council on Education found that only twenty percent of women faculty members had interrupted their careers for nonacademic reasons, compared with twenty-five percent for men.

But despite these facts, women run up against discrimination in higher education and in teaching at every step along the way. For example, the freshman class of the University of North Carolina in 1970 consisted of 1,893 men and only 426 women. The University's openly discriminatory policy stated: "Admission of women on the freshman level will be restricted to those who are especially well qualified." [24]

In higher education, women have not been readily admitted to vocational training programs in industry, or to law or medical schools. According to a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) entitled Employment of Women:

> Fewer girls receive vocational training, while the range of courses provided is much more limited...Vocational training as at present available for women limits their capacity for employment.

Clerical work, hairdressing, and the textile trade are among the limited areas to which women are channeled.

Also, while university officials may insist that there is no sex bias in levels of student pay, there are pay differences based on the types of jobs that men versus women are directed toward.

> Clerical tasks received little more than the minimum wage, and tasks requiring manual or technical skills receive higher rates of pay. Female students are invariably steered to the clerical jobs, while males do the manual and technical jobs such as mowing lawns, raking leaves, wiring circuits. [25]

virginia slims poster

employment

They worked long hours - 11 to 14 hours a day was not uncommon. New York newspaper articles told of girls working from six in the morning until midnight for three dollars a week in factories.

> The work week was filled with 60 hours of noise and machines whirring in rapid vibration. Frequent accidents meant the loss of fingers and limbs. And lint-filled air scourged the mill women with lung disease. Women workers were often paid by the piece, a wage amount of $3 to $7 a week. In the 1840's, rent was around $1-$2, and food, $2-$4 per person per week. These costs were often deducted from their paychecks by company-owned stores and housing dormitories, so many working women never saw a cent of their earnings from one week to the next. 26

There were no minimum wage laws then, or restrictions on how long workers could be forced to stay on the job.

The factory owners claimed they were providing a service "by keeping women and children from idleness and poverty." [27]

In time, the women fought back.

In December of 1828 the first all-women strike of factory workers took place in a cotton mill in Dover, New Hampshire. Three to four hundred women marched through the streets, demanding the right to form a union - to organize themselves to demand better working conditions and wages.

Women conducted some of the earliest mass strikes in American history and were pioneers in the labor movement. For example, in 1845, 5,000 young women struck in the cotton mills of Pittsburgh and Allegheny City where they received $2.50 for a 72 hour week. The women broke down the factory gates and dragged out the strike-breakers.

In the 1800's the right to join a trade union became a widespread demand throughout labor. Yet men and most trade unions did not regard women workers favorably. The general attitude was that women lowered wages by taking underpaid jobs - that women should remain at home, where they belong.

Many trade unions refused to admit women in their membership. The American Federation of Labor felt that women were too difficult to organize because they would not be permanent members of the labor force, and because their wages were so low they could not even afford to pay union dues.

In 1869 the militant shoe workers of Lynn, Massachusetts defeated a wage cut after forming the first national organization of working women, the Daughters of St. Crispin. Their winning motto during their three-year struggle was "We the free women of Lynn, will submit to no rules or set no rules that tend to degrade and enslave us." [28]

In the 1880's workers across the country, including thousands of women, formed Eight-Hour Leagues in the fight against the 12-16 hour day. Then on May 1, 1886 (now celebrated worldwide

as International Workers Day, or May Day), 350,000 workers went on strike. The eight-hour day became a reality for thousands of workers immediately - others were given work time reductions.

"Better to starve fighting than to starve working!" was the battle cry of women weavers in Lawrence, Massachusetts in January 1912. When they opened their pay envelopes and discovered a pay cut, they stopped their looms and marched out. By the end of the month over 23,000 workers were on strike, including Greeks, Turks, Italians, Armenians, Germans, and Irish. More than half were women and children. [29] Two months later the workers returned to work - having won most of their demands, including pay increases of up to 20 percent.

As various economic, industrial and social conditions have changed, so have many of the realities of women's working patterns - what they do, how long they work, and how much they earn. Yet the same attitudes prevalent almost 200 years ago persist, drastically outdated. As these myths persist, so does discrimination against women and men in the labor market. Consider the following:

virginia slims poster

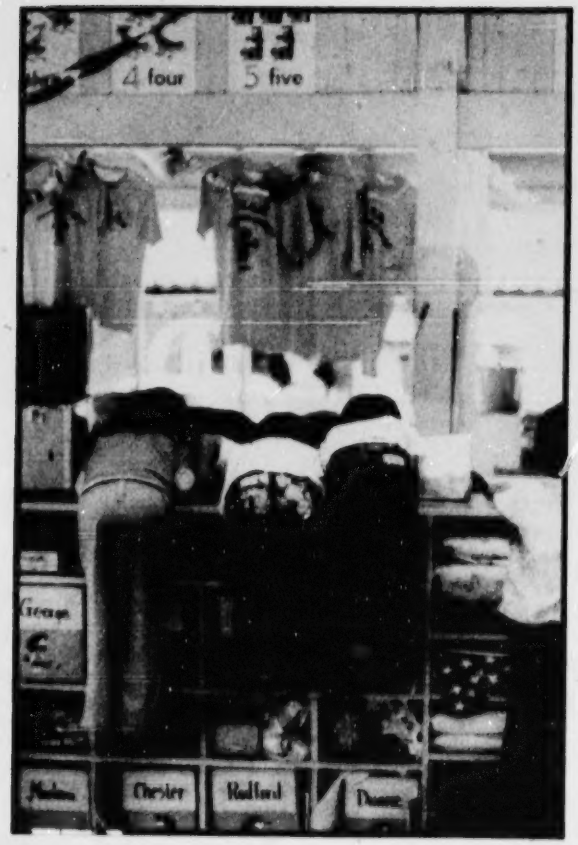
Myth: Women spend most of their time having children and doing housework.
Fact: The tradition of women bearing children has not changed. But where housework and child care once engaged a high proportion of a woman's life, leaving little time for gainful employment, the picture now has changed. By the mid-1970's the actual years devoted to childbearing and childrearing have decreased.

Economic conditions have pressured an earlier return by women to the job market, following maternal interruption. Unlike a century ago, women today generally have more working years ahead of them at this stage than men.

dolle hinch, toy manufacturer

This is not to say there are no differences between male and female work patterns. Men generally work uninterrupted, except when they are unable to find a job, from the time they leave school until the time they retire. Women's work lives proceed at a different rhythm, with interruptions of work during pregnancies and child care. In a work world that is designed to accommodate the male pattern, these interruptions handicap women in finding jobs, receiving training, and being promoted.

A look at employment figures indicates that women are temporarily out of the labor market at a time when men are getting started in their careers and are being considered for advanced training and for supervision. By the time women return to work they have passed the age limit that employers consider worthwhile for such investment. Women in unionized jobs lose working benefits (like seniority, explained later) when they drop out of the job market to care for their children.



One way to lessen the need for interruptions in women's work would be to provide child care facilities and job training programs. But the demand for affordable day care far exceeds the supply. Three aspects of the working woman's situation make this problem a serious one. A growing number of mothers are becoming the sole supporters of their family, particularly with the increase of divorces. More mothers are returning to the work force at an earlier stage. And finally, women generally are grouped

together in the lower-paying, least-advancing kinds of jobs - for which they must assume the costs of child care.

According to the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor in 1973, almost 60 percent of women in the pre-marriage or early marriage years, aged 18-24, are workers. As children are born and grow to school age, the employment figure drops to 50.1 percent between the ages of 25-34. Then employment rises again to 53.3 percent in the 35-44 age group and to 53.7 percent in the 45-54 age bracket. Women in the 55-64 years age group who work are 41.1 percent.

Other figures indicate that fewer women now leave the work force than did formerly. Of those who leave, fewer are staying out for long periods. Those who remain stay for at least twenty years. And according to demographic figures, the national birth-rate has been sharply and continually declining since World War II. Women are generally having fewer children - and have more time to spend working.

Myth: Women have a "choice" to work, while men have a "commitment". Women work to supplement the man's earnings, to earn extra spending money, or to have something different and interesting to do outside the home.

Fact: Women work primarily for the same reason that men do: to earn a living. Three-fifths of working women are those who are single, divorced, separated, or deserted and thus are the heads of families.[30] Some work because their husbands are incapacitated, unskilled, unemployed, or simply earn too little to support family needs on one income. Increasingly, an acceptable standard of living requires two major breadwinners in a family, particularly with the rising level of consumer wants and inflation. The problem is touched upon in the following dialogue:

Tom is 35, and works as a project manager on various construction jobs throughout the state. He and his wife, who teaches at one of the community colleges, share responsibilities in the caring of their four year old son. Tom is leaving a meeting of a community action organization that he belongs to, where the

group has just finished planning out a series of projects for the next few months. Tom turns to one of his friends in frustration. "If I didn't have to spend so much time on my job, I'd love to work on some of these community projects full-time." His friend asks him, "Then why don't you just do what you want to do?" "I can't," says Tom, "I've got to earn enough to keep the family going - I'm trapped. My wife works, but if we were to live on her earnings alone, we'd never make it. Women just don't get paid what they're worth. You women think you've got a monopoly on complaints. Let me tell you what it's like being a man. At least women have a choice - they can work if they want to - they have time to do other things like go to school, take up hobbies, work on community projects if they can afford to. But men - we're expected to work full-time, all the time. You know what I'd like to do? I'd love to take classes in glass-blowing, or something else. You think I ever have time for something like that? Not until I retire."

combatting sex discrimination

Sex discrimination can be bad business. That is what the huge conglomerate that operates most of the nation's telephones, American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) - affectionately known as Ma Bell - learned in 1973. AT&T employs more females than any other corporation in the United States. In its rigidly segregated work force, 97 percent of the telephone operators were women, 86 percent of the plant workers were men. In all, 1,800 sex and race discrimination complaints were filed against the company. In 1973 the company was forced to pay $38 million in back pay and raises. According to the National Organization for Women (NOW), this was actually only a fraction of the estimated $4 billion in back pay alone due women since 1964, when the Civil Rights Act made discrimination illegal.

In a much larger settlement, Sears Roebuck, the largest retailer in the United States is expected to pay over $100,000,000

in 1976 in back pay and wage raises due women employees because of discrimination.[31] Like the earlier campaign against sex discrimination at AT&T, the focus on Sears was sponsored by NOW. The effort involved over 200 of the group's chapters across the country documenting Sears' discriminatory hiring, training, and promotion practices.

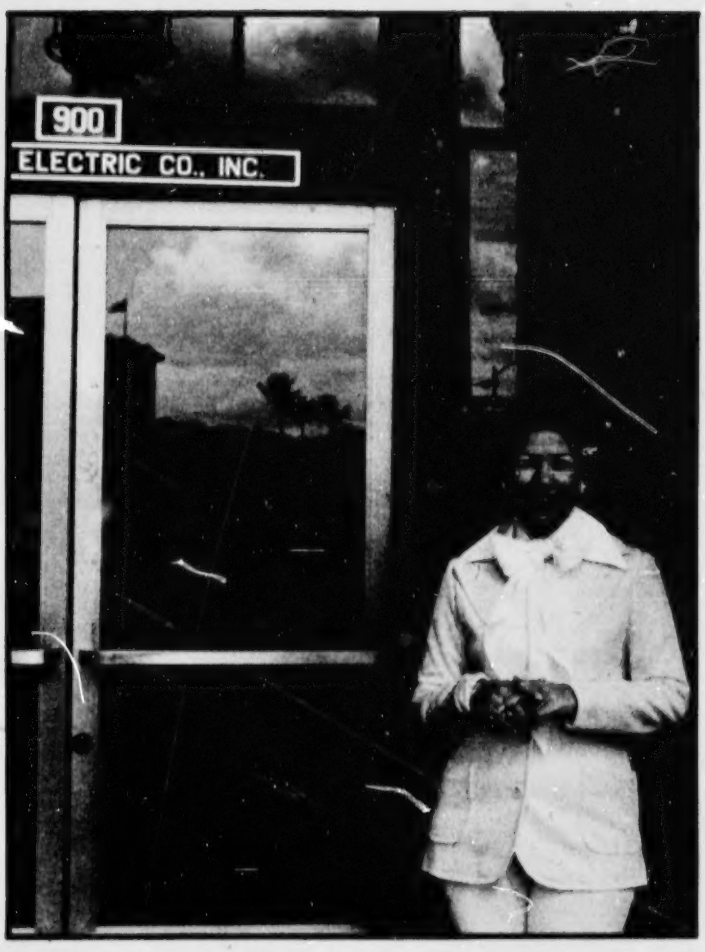
When 4,200 workers at the two FARAH slacks plants in Texas went on strike in the early 1970's, they had been prevented from organizing for unionization for higher wages and better work conditions.[32] With the help of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, a major labor union in the clothing industry, the workers' 22-month strike was successful. Women, who were 87 percent of the workers, gained working benefits, and several of the original strikers went on to become officials in the new union.

Among the five million union women in the country, a small number recently pulled together, realizing the need to work together for expanded roles and rights of women in unions. In 1974 the Coalition of Labor Union Women formed by concerned women in unions like the Amalgamated Meat Cutters Union and the United Auto Workers, attracted thousands of women to its first convention.

Aside from the organized efforts by women at places of work, dozens of lawsuits filed, and women moving into new fields of work, like lifeguards, highway construction work, and masonry, more than 40,000 complaints of lack of equal pay and equal opportunity had been filed with the federal government by the late 1960's.

As women reviewed the picture of working women in the mid-1970's, the facts were sobering. While it was clear that progress had been made in the cooperative efforts of women working together to solve some of their problems, the goals of equality for working women were a long way off.

First, despite passage of laws rendering sex discrimination illegal, and actions of women filing discrimination charges, the rate of increase of women's already inferior salaries was considerably less than that of males' salaries of the 1967-1975 period.[33]



winona machado, training and employment assistant, hawaiian electric co.

Second, resistance of corporations to laws requiring nondiscrimination threatens to increase as businesses seek to avoid affirmative action plans. "Affirmative action plans" are required by federal legislation of agencies and businesses doing work with the federal government to show nondiscriminatory personnel policies and practices - or to devise "plans" that would do away with such practices. This requirement enabled women interested in leaving office jobs like secretarial work and seeking better paying jobs to find work in construction, masonry, and other kinds of manual labor - long considered a high-paying, male stronghold. By the mid-1970's there were major signs that business was ready to put "affirmative action" on the chopping block, rather than comply with legislative prohibitions against discrimination.

Third, working women face stiff resistance from most unions to some of their most important demands relating to seniority rights of workers, protective legislation, and the secondary role of women in union leadership.

One protection labor unions offer workers is seniority rights or the guarantee that workers that are the last hired will be the first laid off. The example below illustrates the most frequent conflict between seniority rights and the inclusion of women employees, especially in companies whose work force is mostly male.

> Factory X has just announced a 10 percent cutback in the work force. There are 1000 workers. 900 are men. The rest are women who were mostly hired within the last six months, after the company was charged with sex discrimination in its hiring practices. Because the workers' union protects the seniority rights of its workers, it insists that the 100 women be laid off because they were the last hired, and should be the first fired. The women are organizing to file sex discrimination charges if they are fired.

Another conflict between labor unions and many women's rights groups is over protective legislation, prohibiting for example, certain exposures, operations and locations to women. Unions argue that the push for equal rights will wipe out hard-won health and safety laws protecting women; women's rights proponents reason that such protections should be extended to all workers.

For instance, as today's workers learn about the health and safety impact of hundreds of chemically toxic substances used on the job, they are realizing that <u>all</u> workers need protection - not just women. We are now learning that exposure to high levels of lead, vinyl chloride, formaldehyde, and scores of other toxic chemicals adversely affects the fertility of women <u>and</u> men, and the future health of their unborn children. [34] As their counterparts over one hundred years ago, working women today are also arguing that equal pay and opportunity alone will not do them and their families much good, if hazardous working conditions ruin their health and shorten their lives. Increasingly, improved occupational health and safety conditions are being demanded of employers.

Protective legislation was designed to protect the health and safety of women and not of men. It limited the number of hours women could work and the kinds of work women could be engaged in, and imposed restrictions against night work, which often involved higher rates of pay. Laws were passed which governed how long pregnant women could stay on the job.

hawaiian electric co.

Predominantly male-led unions - in the early 1970's only 4.7 percent of union leaders were women [35] - have favored protective legislation. The concept that women had to be given protections not given men became an overused excuse for continuing inequities in work opportunities, promotions, pay, and job training for women. This led to on-going antagonisms between proponents of equal rights and proponents of "protective rights" for women.

Finally, while the resistance of male-dominated unions to working women's rights have been a serious problem, a more widespread problem has been the complete lack of union protection in most women's occupations. Eighty-seven percent of all women workers do not belong to labor unions in the United States. [36] And certain workers in some occupations like legal secretaries lack important legal protections involved in forming a union.

One of the most basic problems facing women in today's job market is the growing level of unemployment everywhere. The health of the nation's economy, and increasingly, that of the world, has been the major indicator of employment opportunities, first for men, and then for women. In the mid-1970's, the nation experienced

unemployment rates above eight percent, an all time high for several decades. In 1975 more than 22,000 people in Honolulu were looking for jobs, yet there were only 4,000 openings. The problem of not enough jobs was nationwide, as were unemployment figures for women which were 35 percent higher than those of men.[37]

So long as employers believe they can get away with hiring women at considerably lower wages than men, women will continue to be perceived as an economic threat. Instead of pitting men against women in a race for limited job opportunities, full employment or some form of basic economic provision is necessary.

politics

For many women working hard for the right to vote in federal elections in the early 1900's, it was tempting to think that the frustrations of discrimination might easily disappear with the passage of a law giving women the vote. That would mean that women could vote, run for elected office, and work to pass other laws that would outlaw specific kinds of sex discrimination in employment, education and other areas.

So exciting was this proposal that the push for "emancipation" brought together women who had played a major role in the fight against slavery, the temperance movement, and some of the women who had pioneered the battle for working women's rights together with smaller numbers of men.

Participation in the suffrage movement was no way to win a popularity contest. Women had to face jeers and boos as they spoke in public. Like the thousands of women of the factories and textile mills who had gone public with their grievances, the suffrage women also took to the streets. They marched in the streets carrying banners. They picketed outside the White House until their public pressure could no longer be ignored. They addressed state legislatures to lobby for revision of local laws relating to women's rights.

The suffrage amendment was finally passed in 1920 as the Nineteenth Amendment to the federal constitution, 55 years after it was introduced into Congress. Though suffrage existed in twenty-nine states before 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment allowed women all over the country to vote.

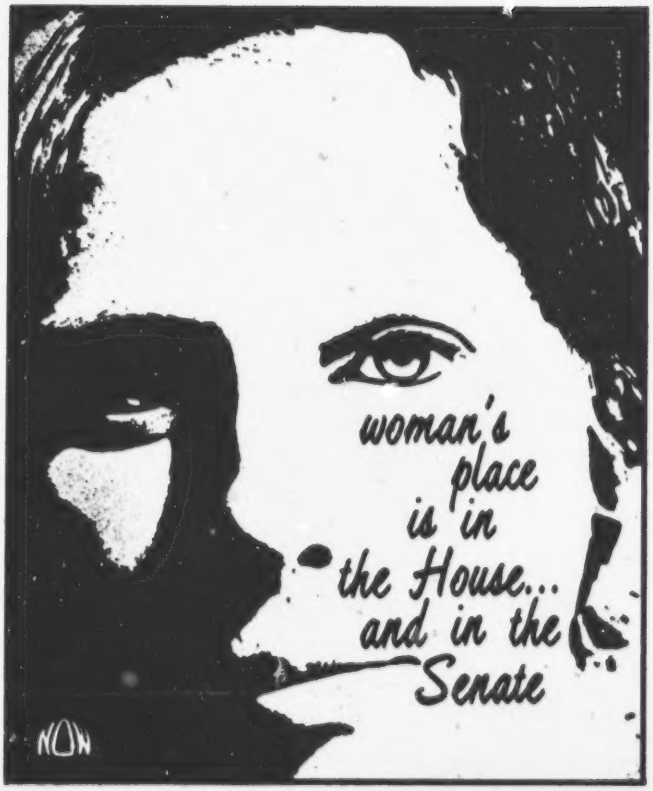
Anyone who had expected "instant equality" for women to come with suffrage was sorely disappointed. As with other legal rights, gaining their enactment is only the first step of a long journey. The important question then becomes: How are the legal rights exercised, and by how many? In politics there are several activities to look at: voting, participation in political parties and campaigns, and holding office.

1. Voting: The most obvious change occurring after passage of the suffrage amendment was a dramatic drop in voter participation. In 1900, 79 percent of eligible voters had voted. Only 53 percent voted in 1920. Records were not available to break down that percentage into men and women voters. But many believed the decline in numbers of voters meant women were staying away from the polls in large numbers. The National League of Women Voters, organized in 1920 by women who had been active in the National American Woman's Suffrage Association (the key women's organization coordinating the campaign for suffrage), was the first of a number of organizations to begin the "get out the vote" crusade.

Gradually over the years the number of women voters increased, although there were always more men voting than women. In Hawaii in 1920, 65.4 percent of the registered men and 43.9 percent of the women voted, while in 1930 the percentage of voting men was 63.4 and 57.8 for registered women. [38]

2. Political Parties: A clear sign that the right to vote did not bring equality to women in politics has been the role of women in the traditional institutions of the political world: the major political parties. The records of the major parties are full of lists of women who have held equal representation with

men on the national committees of the parties, been assigned titles of party responsibility, and been included among well-publicized supporters of major political candidates. Though all that is a foot in the door, women have for the most part played the role of foot soldiers, while men call the key shots and decide on strategy.



national organization for women, baltimore chapter poster

Unfortunately, many of the same complaints voiced by women over forty years ago, continue today. As one Democratic National Committee woman noted in the President's Research Committee on Social Trends report:

> ...we do not find women in a parity with men in party councils nor do we find women getting party support, that is, if a woman seeks office the fact she is a woman handicaps her regardless of qualifications.

Other female legislators added the following:

> This generous national policy is not carried out by the lesser men leaders. In my state, many of these are of the older generation who feel that politics is not a woman's business and they are far from cooperative. Women are encouraged to run for office only when defeat is certain. If victory seems possible, the nomination is always claimed by men.

> Women must not be content to do things in a man's way. The obligation rests upon them to think and to act together as women if they wish advantages to women as a group. Women do not frame the policies, build the platforms, or shape the political ideas. When they organize as women and support women in politics - then and not till then will they be a real force.
>
> ...woman has done little or nothing in politics. She has allowed man to shift much of the hard work in party organization to her for which she gets small pay and small places of influence. [39]

Today, women active in politics are joining together to demand and slowly gain equal responsibilities and representation in planning programs, selecting candidates and making strategy decisions. In 1972 Jean Westwood briefly headed the National Democratic Party. And since the 1974 elections, Mary Louise Smith had headed the national Republican Party.

Women are beginning to realize that equality in politics requires meaningful participation in all aspects of politics.

3. Holding Office: Women hold roughly 5 percent of all the public offices in the United States. Yet women constitute 53 percent of the voting population and over 40 percent of the labor force. [40] After the 1975 elections across the country, there were 19 women in Congress, 610 in state legislatures, one woman serving as governor, and many other women at other levels of government. [41] They serve as heads of government agencies, on regulatory boards and commissions, and less frequently assume judgeships. While women officeholders are still a tiny minority - 4 percent of Congress and 9 percent of state legislative offices [42] - their present numbers are still a vast improvement over the number of women officeholders as recently as 40 years ago.

Though the entry of women into electoral politics has often been on the coattails of their husbands, women are now being elected more on their own merits. For instance, Governor Ella Grasso, elected in 1974 in Connecticut, was the first woman

governor to be elected in her own right, instead of succeeding her husband to the position as women have done in several other states.

hawaii state senators

jean king

Women are part of Hawaii's political scene but they generally continue to take the back seat to male politicians in numbers and positions of power. Hawaii's Representative Patsy Mink has served in Congress since 1964, where she is well known for her advocacy of equal rights for women and her leadership in pushing for equal opportunities in education. Locally, there are ten women in the State Legislature, and one woman in city and county councils.

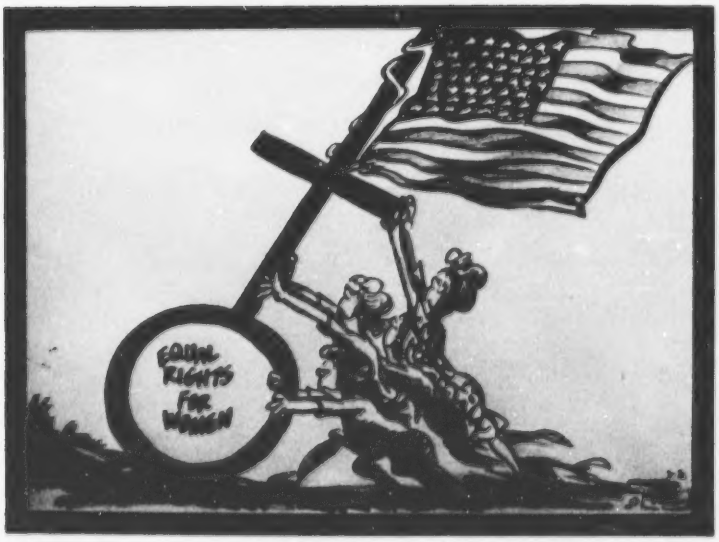
patricia saiki

Though traditionally women appointed to government positions have been placed in work areas that most closely parallel services rendered by women in the home, that is now slowly changing.

Previously women were placed in:

> "inspectorships in establishments employing girls and women, judgeships in juvenile courts, directorships of institutions in which women or girls or young children of either sex, or possibly the aged and inferior, were cared for." [43]

In Hawaii in the early 1970's a review of the memberships of State boards and commissions revealed that a majority of the women appointed were on commissions relating to library services, nursing, and other areas traditionally serviced by women.[44] Since that situation was publicly spotlighted by women's groups and other citizen organizations women have been appointed to more commissions and also to more administrative positions, such as the Director of Finance in the Department of Budget and Finance, and Director of the Hawaiian Homes Commission. In 1976 Hawaii ranked fifth in the nation with 23.7 percent female appointees to State boards and commissions.



hawaii state commission on the status of women logo

The story of women as lobbyists goes back to the days of Dorothea Dix and her lifelong campaign for the care of the indigent insane. In the 1840's and 1850's she took her meticulously collected, first-hand observations of the lack of treatment or cruelly inhuman treatment given insane outcasts from one state legislature to another and finally to Congress. [45]

Political observers believe the massive political corruption revealed during the national Watergate scandal and the positive reputation of women as a force for morality in government is responsible for the significant shift in public opinion favoring women in politics.

> "The climate for women entering politics in America has never been more favorable than it is today," according to a 1975 public opinion poll. [46]

The nationwide Gallup Survey showed seven in ten Americans saying the nation would be governed as well, or better, if more women held political office. Among the principal reasons given are that women are more conscientious, economy-minded and would 'clean up' politics.

Since then an enormous range of educational, occupational, professional, union, ethnic, ancestral, religious, women's rights and political activists organizations, federations, and associations - hundreds of organizations - have been part of the women's movement.

Typified by a growing impatience and a new militant spirit that was not as prevalent among the early women's rights lobby, today's lobby, made up of both old and new groups, has expanded its national goals, reflecting an increasingly wider range of interests, occupations, numbers and programs of its organizations.

Among the diverse groups supporting the united effort for passage and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and for the use of federal resources to combat sex discrimination are the following: [47]

1. National, political activist organizations: Organized to influence national policy on the status of women in the late 1960's and early 1970's, the top four such organizations are the National Organization for Women (NOW), Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), and the National Association of Commissions on the Status of Women. With several hundred chapters across the country and over 50,000 members, they have played key roles in lobbying, educating, litigating and organizing women's problems.

2. Professional women's organizations: Formed to promote women in these occupational ranks and to improve the general status of women, such long-time organizations as the Business and Professional Clubs, American Association of University Women, National Association of Women Lawyers, American Medical Women's Association,

Association of American Women Dentists, Association of Women in Architecture, Intercollegiate Association of Women Students, National Association of Bank Women, Women's National Press Club and others have added their pressure to the push for ratification of the ERA.

3. Nonprofessional occupational groups: Until very recently, the United Auto Workers and the International Union of Electrical Workers were the only labor unions supporting the ERA. While unions have supported equal pay for equal work, they have opposed expanding job opportunities for women that would threaten the seniority rights of male workers. As women in the late 1960's realized their secondary status in union leadership, hundreds of sex discrimination lawsuits were filed by women workers against their unions. Federally Employed Women (FEW) formed in 1968 to work to end sex discrimination among women employees in the federal government. Women Employed (WE), a working women's group in Chicago's downtown area, has gained precedent-setting protections for women working for insurance companies and for women policyholders. In 1974 the formation of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) promised a new arena for labor women to develop their mutual strength for common benefits. The National Committee on Household Employment was formed in 1970 to improve conditions for domestic workers.

4. Church groups: As church group women who had always focused on social service volunteer efforts grew concerned about women's rights, organizations like the National Council of Jewish and Catholic Women, the American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League, and many Protestant denominations and Catholic groups joined the women's rights lobbies in Washington D.C. and at the state level. Programs on equal rights also became a major focus of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

5. Minority women's organizations: These include the National Council of Negro Women - with over 4 million members in 1970, the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs (patterned after its white counterpart), with 15,000 members, the Third World Women's Alliance, and the National Black Women's Political Caucus.

The focus on women's equal rights seems to include all sectors of society: from the Girl Scouts of America to the aggressive organization of senior citizens called the Gray Panthers, organizing against inadequate pensions and unfair social security regulations; from the mothers on welfare to the professional and working women, as well as the previously mentioned groups.

Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment would mean an end to all laws and practices that discriminate on the basis of sex. Laws that offer women greater protection than men from health and safety dangers on the job would be expanded to include protection of men, a step which many states have already taken. The ERA would wipe the legal slate clean of all laws that have denied women the equality that was the founding principle of this country

two hundred years ago - for men.

In addition to the ERA, numerous other issues are currently being addressed by the women's lobby. These include the push for federally supported child care facilities, pension plans and health insurance that cover women, reform of the welfare system, expanded social service fundings, enforcement of equal pay and equal employment opportunity regulations, as well as the on-going demands of women over the past decades.

By the mid-seventies, two themes shaped the women's movement: the need for unity among women's groups and the need to attract the participation of women previously alienated from the movement, particularly blue-collar and lower-income women. The potential for self-destruction of the women's movement was spotlighted by the intense conflict between factions proposing goals and programs at NOW's 1975 convention. To women leaders like Heather Booth, such divisions are "a sign that the stakes are much higher now. As advances have been made in women's rights, women have turned on each other." [48] Instead, she stressed, women must unite in strength against the barriers: government non-enforcement of laws and corporate defiance of nondiscrimination requirements.

On December 2, 1975, one of the most exciting and hopeful developments in the women's movement began. Women's organizations across the country announced the U.S. National Women's Agenda, an 11-point itemed listing of priorities, agreed upon by an astonishingly broad range of 90 national women's organizations, representing an estimated membership of 30 million women.

According to feminist leader, Congresswoman Bella Abzug:

> The Agenda signals the beginning of what can be an activist coalition embracing women from such diverse groups as the YWCA, Girls Club of America, League of Women Voters, National Organization for Women, Church Women United, Campfire Girls, National Council of Negro Women, Association of Women Business Owners, National Council of Jewish Women, National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, National Women's Political Caucus, National Committee on Household Employment, National Gay Task Force, and United Auto Workers' Community Action Program Department. [49]

The practical priorities for change in the Agenda are backed up by a series of steps needed for implementation. The basic objectives sought by this impressive coalition effort include the following: [50]

1. Fair representation and participation in the political process
2. Equal education and training
3. Meaningful work and adequate compensation
4. Equal access to economic power
5. Quality child care for all children
6. Quality health care and services
7. Adequate housing
8. Just and humane treatment in the criminal justice system
9. Fair treatment by and equal access to media and the arts
10. Physical safety
11. Respect for the individual.

Another milestone occurred on May 11, 1976, when five million dollars was appropriated by Congress for the convening of a National Conference for Women. In anticipation of this historic bill the Hawaii State Eighth Legislature approved the sum of $25,000 to provide funds to formulate a committee to convene a State Women's Conference in order to achieve the objectives and goals of the Congressional bill. The Hawaii bill, introduced by Representative Velma Santos, stipulated that the committee "shall be open to all women...with special emphasis on representatives of low income women, members of diverse racial, ethnic and religious groups, women of all ages and individual advocates of women's rights." [51]

The unity of women of diverse segments of society and the accomplishment of programs to equalize opportunities for women will not be achieved overnight. But the establishment of the U.S. National Women's Agenda and the convening of a National Conference for Women represent the threshold for acceptance on an equal basis and for emergence from the "cage".

Today's students can now decide for themselves whether, and in what way, they wish to join the effort on behalf of the simple proposition underlying the equal rights movement: that women must not be prevented from pursuing opportunities they desire and for which they are qualified - just because they are women.

united nations symbol, decade for women, 1975-1985

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